

The American Hero

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Summary: Captain America's darker side.. Can Detective's Lane and Morales stop America's greatest?

The American Hero

"Oh God, Bobby? Bobby!! My baby lord no..." Her hysterical screams were barely heard through the calaphony of the crime scene... She had the most right to be there, more than the pack of media vulturing her pain, nor the morbid onlooker hoping to catch a glimpse of a dead body. She had the most right because Bobby Morham was her own and only son.

Detective Lane glanced at her and moaned at the rain just beginning to tap at his leather coat. He tossed away half a cigarette knowing he'd probably never finish it. Hands dug deep in his pockets, he knelt down beside the body, careful not to touch it. Up from behind to watch over his shoulder, came his partner, Morales, who'd just passed on to detective status some 2 months before. Still unable to stomach a dead body, or even the faintest scent of death, he held a handkerchief over his nose and mouth.

"Name, Bobby Morham... Looks like Cap got to the poor kid, coming home from a party... No witnesses to the crime, but a few friends saw him before the time of death." As he spoke, he gazed along the boy's face. look young for his age. 17, but beardless, smooth... An all American boy if he's ever seen one.

"Damn" Said Morales, turning his hazel eyes away from the corpse, "this in the type of shit that let's you know it's the 90's...Millennium is on it's way, baby. Same M.O., huh?"

"Same M.O.. Bruise patterns indicate he was crushed in an embrace.. subsequently strangled and finally, his throat was slit. He.. ", Lane stopped to nod towards another indistinguishable NewYork alley way, "was dragged from that alley and onto the sidewalk here."

"Bastard realized what he was doing, I think.. Knew he was killing

the kid and slit his throat, like Mercy. Beat him half dead and finished the job like he was doing a favor.."

"We know he has a guilty conscience... Hell, the shrinks think it's what drives him."

"Don't give a fuck, man.. Great American hero or no, he's going to rot in a cell for a long time... Or even better, rot in hell after a gassing."

Just then one of Crime-scene's photographers came and stirred in the background, waiting for Lane to step away. Without a glance or a word to the man, Lane complied and stepped back to join his partner. The rain began to fall in sheets, rapping against his leather in strangely hypnotic rhythms. The man began taking close up shots of the boys swelled and sliced throat, as if he weren't focusing on the job but actually enjoying it. Morales shook his head and glared at the little man. Lane knew he was of the opinion that all of the crime-scene division and foriencsics were morbid bastards.. They got too much of a kick out of the job. And many of them were of the opinion he was biased against anyone without a gun and shinny badge. As far as Lane was concerned men like him, men of the law who went out, risked their lives, and caught the filth that scared his kids at night, were the Heroes. And Captain American was the greatest of them all.

"Good God.. He was the best of us, Richie.. My kids looked up to him."

Morales clapped his shoulder, casting a sober glance to the still hysteric mother. "Get over it man.. Your kids will get a new hero, You if they're smart. Can't rely on the costumed freaks no more, you know? America ain't what it used to be." When she finally degraded to choke whimpering, the boy's mother was escorted out of the rain, into her apartment building. Lane climbed inside the black crown Victoria, leaving the door wide, and got out his note pad, surveying the scene a last time and scribbling shorthand with fervor.

When Lane entered the apartment building, Richie Morales was had already begun questioning the mother. It wasn't especially needed, they knew who they were dealing with and why. Morales nodded to the mother as a neighbor continued consoling her. He looked up and flashed a grin, one Lanes expression showed he disapproved of. They went off to the side, speaking in hushed tones.

Morales' voice was a bit higher pitched, showing his excitement. "Seems Bobby was a football player.. popular too, and high in class rank."

"Okay, so he won't grow up to be the executive he would've been.."

"Know what I think? I think he started _ watching _ this kid, not just stumbling onto him. He's just stopped being random and might actually be stalking his next victims.. Hell, he could have been stalking the entire time and we thought it wrong." _

_ "We knew he lost it, but actually hunting these boys? Something pushed him, even farther than he was before.. He's gone serial sociopath." _

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Crime-scene had finished up and were bagging the boys body. The two stepped back out, the rain welcomed them, falling harder than it had before.. Lane looked up and caught a glimpse of Manhattan skyline.

That same skyline was seen by the bright blue eyes of Steve Rogers. His thoughts were wholly unfocused. His eyes saw that skyline, but his mind couldn't register it. All they could recognize was the blood soaking his hands. He walked up a crowded street, bumping into several passersby, all who ignored him as they bumped into some other passerby. He was the only one who could see that red, the rest saw normal hands, strong callused hands of a man who worked hard at what he did. What he did was Heroism, for a time. It was an occupation few could take, one that was more like a lifeform, a beast demanding to be fed sacrifices. His own partner was the sacrifice that haunted him now. He'd wander the Manhattan streets, no longer a hero and not able to be mortal man, seeing that face over and again. His greatest failing, his re-occurring nightmare, his ghost all taunting him in every young man's face, every sly grin and cocky wink .

He stopped his long march to glance at a storefront window. Didn't have many of those these days, when everyone had a t.v. "The man once known as the greatest hero in America and perhaps the world, Captain America, has taken another life, police report. The forth in a string of murders, while in costume. No new evidence has been found, but police assure.."

Before her sentence was finished he raced up the street, forcing away all thoughts with the fear a single memory of that boy, Bobby, and the rest slipping through. He stopped dead center on the sidewalk, his breath catching and releasing raggedly though not from exertion.. There, some five yards ahead chatting jocularly with a blushing girl of Hispanic blood, was a grinning, cocky, handsome and young, all American boy. Bucky was haunting him again...

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